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MUSINGS

OF A

YOUTH,

BY

THOMAS DANIEL.

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MUSINGS

OF A

YOUTH,

BY

THOMAS DANIEL.

BENTONVILLE:
BENTON COUNTY DEMOCRAT.
1897.

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PREFACE.

With none to suggest, reprove, or dissuade; with hope of pleasing no circle within the bounds of that which encompasses all reasoning humanity, the author of these "Musings" confidingly submits the meager product of many an exacting hour to a discriminative public, conscious of few misgivings and without the slightest promptings of hesitancy. We are, however, aware that, on entering the wonderfully varied and productive, yet much trespassed "Eden of literature," no line of composition presents a more indifferent and uninviting aspect than that of poetry, to one hoping to contribute something to enrich a fertility already marvelous in diversity of product, and in the rich blendings of beauty and granduer; and presenting a variety of harmony and expression which apparently no touch could heighten, and which no power of thought could render more appreciable.

But let the results be favorable or otherwise, surely if we had little to say we have taken little time in saying it, and though a more practical and discerning judgment may look distrustingly upon these boyish effusions, we have only to return the glance bearing the outward manifestations of a determination invoilably centered upon one attainment in reply to the questioning gaze and sing again,

"We little sought and less have gained,
Yet, yet not done tho' pained the senses ache,
Nor curb to utterance the glowing thought,
We yet shall sing,—in bolder raptures break,
And move the hardened world which love would fain forsake."

The author is no time-server, no prattler after the follies of men; we have written simply as we thought;

if such be not timely or unworthy of the regard of a generous and ofttimes too indulgent public, there are other chords upon the harp unstruck. We have only attempted in this

"To burning dare what age may better do,"

with the simple resolve to sing till every lyre-string is broken, and until the last echo dies away in the palace of thought.

Pea Ridge, Ark., Nov. 12, 1897.

THE HERMIT.

A Series of Meditative Monologues.

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

Within a land, but little reck ye where,
A southern realm where fatted plenty throve,
And Nature shunned economy her care
To lavish round the gifts she begged of Jove
On God's unthankful race,—within his cove,
Bred in the current of life's deepest moan,
A wight of care with chiding wisdom strove,
Heir of her smile, whom Fate had grievance shown—
Apart from preyful lust and to the world alone.

II.

Through years that taught his glowing thought their lore
Harsh power had grated o'er his youthful wage,
Whilst staid advice with pond'rous pretext bore
Much free experience never didst engage ;
The child of misery and nursing rage
Now wed to breath of night's serenest hush,
Once in time's book he read the inkier page,
Schooled in such cares no age would dare to crush,
Yet silent bred a hope which cost his soul a blush.

III.

His name ? Ah well, his father's was his own,
A sire austere, ne'er pitying but to chide,
Unfeeling to the mood and joy-lorn tone
The son ennursed, yet feigned to lightly hide ;
But even such his spirit deeper dyed
With dark'ning fancies streaming vaporous doubt,
And streaking skies of thought with colors wide,
No parent's fury could blot blindly out
From Muse's starry soul where pulsed a heart devout.

IV.

Yet Fate had not been all unkind, nor Truth
A harsher mistress than becomes her rod,
For soft distilled o'er stubblefields of youth
A fragrance fell, and blossoms sprang to nod,
Tho' not so common as on other sod ;
But fragrant most of all that fragrant be—
Deep-flushed and high rank-blown o'er nourishing clod—
Perfuming aught Hope's breath might gladly free
The passion-bloom on love's the still unwith'ring tree,

V.

But from those times with younger bearings fraught
I turn ; he bore his lot with silence meet,
Till all parental claims were from him wrought
Then chose him out a far and nameless seat,
From Ignorance with vaunted spoil and cheat,
Removed where muse could strike her deepest note ;
To him with lore were nature's halls replete,
There would he dwell, till naught of Wisdom's rote
Should 'scape his lengthened glance, no truth be deemed
remote.

VI.

Yet think not he but careless turned away
From many a scene, and hearts—a dearest *few!*
Remorse, the unearthed fountain of all clay,
In fullest course meets not the meaner view,
When common grief would strike the senses through ;
Unfriended love in woe grows none the less,
And Fancy aye hath colors for a hue,—
Thus as our hopes the strongest fears outpress,
We breathe unto ourselves through choking bitterness.

VII.

Ingratitude ! a father's curse ! oh, God,
Should we thus loathe the hour of manly pride
From former trust with doubtful journeyings plod
A various course with unschooled hope our guide ?
Where weanless thought alone seems undenied ?
Are we but fragments reckless fate doth tear
From Thy great vesture, cast to winds that wide,
Directless sweep ? Thus from a parent's stair
To turn unsighed, unwept, were half of death to bear.

VIII.

'Tis not the parting, but the nameless death
Such separation throws around young toil,
That drains into the years of future birth
And saps vitality from other soil,
Than of the few short hours, the present spoil ;—
But this must end,—we are not such weak dust
As bears a current Fate can never foil,
If such, indeed, how soon to vilest lust
Our souls would shriv'ling sink and harden as a crust !

IX.

And he forgiving might ere long forget
This one sore trial, drowning rage in woe;
Invite some after hour to keen regret
That life and love such long divorce should know,
For love *was* his tho' painful seemed the flow.
The seasons might unteach the bitterer fold
Of cursing thoughts, unbear a nobler glow
Of truth thus conned,—few filial throbs grow cold,
Consume to weaker clay, or melt within our mould.

X.

The world he little knew, it knew him less;
His soul an uncut stone of doubted worth
No world could polish, man not idly guess
If from that ray should gleam a higher birth,
So lowly wrought, and formed of lower earth;
But unto Fortune would he knead his fire,
And cast in Fate a shape of questioned girth,
And chord symphonious many an oft-struck lyre,
Till thrilling one in note to breathe his soul entire.

XI.

Magnanimous blest Thought! secluded Will!
Defyless Reason! Hope undared! what miss
Could mind thus feel? What more directing skill
To make man *man* need he than only this?
The rich, rich fountain pouring unto bliss,
But drink and follow nameless trustful life,
Each draught hath sweetened from a holy kiss,
No current but doth froth to noblest strife,
And all unto an end with power and glories rife!

XII.

To breathe with God as some high kindred power,—
High and yet near enow for earthly wail
To wake an echo of self-torturing hour—
To know Omnipotence through sheening veil,
Unrent by Fate it tangles and makes pale ;
To feel the pulse great-veined and unconfined,
Reforcing truth in souls that palsied fail,
That throbs to thought this universal Mind ;
To share the infinite tho' mortal cursed and blind ;

XIII.

To draw unto all glory as a child
Inclining to a parent's sure embrace ;
To lean on breasts as full as undefiled
Is deigned not such as prod or serve the race,
Or smile on all, the witless fops of grace ;
But he, to whom the world is as a sound
Creation-struck, a note we vaguely trace,
Yet seldom chord, may tread a wider ground,
And with a bold divine from cloud to sky on bound.

XIV.

To live is but to want, to know to gain ;
As worldings tempted of a wild unknown,
We breathe, we dare, we waste in hungry pain,
And heap on Fate the curses of our groan ;
Distrusting man we grope to God alone,
Nor reck if thus we fall unmourned, unknelled,
But from such knowledge do we shrink undone
In living dread on many an hour impelled
And guess what God might give which Fate has long withheld.

XV.

On one white brow is set the double seal,
In one full breast the genial breath expands,
To Muse in generous Fancy's casting deal
Befalls a mind that meets her high demands;
And as a patient weaves now she stands
With warp for woof her newly trust inlies
And holds her shuttle as a soul unbands
The girdle of its thought inwove of sighs,
And streaks of faded love, and fancy's thousand dyes.

XVI.

Blithe spirit, nymph divine or lowly sprung,
Oh, gracious Muse, wake my dull-chorded lute
To thrilling ecstacies of notes unsung,
Or deep-bassed thought if Fancy's tongue be mute;
And if thou bend to list my anxious suit
Thou proud, fair Pallas of the worldly will,
And it to thee prove no insipid fruit
The soul that felt the young awakened thrill
Prefers it thee, oh Fame, tho' borne through many an ill.

XVII.

The bitterness my innocence partook
Perchance may drug this savored after thought;
The doubt, the hush, the sullen fiendish look
Of younger dread my years have not out-wrought,
May bring a curse no melody hath taught
As in the waste of dire remembered things
Discerning Fancy falls to much unsought,
And o'er the wild a fiercer aspect flings
Where scarce a kindly plant about the ruin clings.

XVIII.

The strange deep accents of the changeful sea,
The furious shout of storm-fiends o'er the bay,
The startled echoes dancing wildly free
Along the fierce, the wild electric play,
The gathered foam now lost in denser spray,
The wind—the shock—the elements' mad thrill—
These, these are such as fell my younger day,
My younger day in warm yet moody will
Leaped unto these as much a passion might instill.

XIX.

My sire dwelt near, along the wave-torn strand,
His scant dominions formed the sole intent
Of all the house, save *one* of deeper brand,
From infancy that loved the roving scent
Of air, of tide, or aught to freedom bent,—
Perhaps I wronged, 'twas but a tearless task
I thus dissolved, and none the hopes it rent,
I but assumed my nature's truer mask,
What more should doubting care then seek or vainer ask?

XX.

Life, life of love that mirrored all my soul!
I live to thee, tho' wrung from every care,
When from thy breast the sighs unmurmured stole;
To thee I turn, a memory sweetly fair,
As somewhat veiling else 'twere vile to bear,
Yet thee, e'en thee, my passion bade forsake,
Affection's growth to thought would seem a tare.
And love a poison to the hearts that ache,
Instilling death too slow for such to feel the break.

XXI.

Keep, keep my heart, which hath no other claim,
Bound unto thine with an unwedded woe ;
Yea, treasure it tho' it become but name,
A mote, a blot within thy purer glow ;
Let wary circumstance displace the throw
My aim hath made—am I not passion's child ?
From lifeless love to loveless life below
Seems scarce a pace tho' love becomes exiled,
And life turns to itself upon the soul enisled.

XXII.

Yet have I marked the span, 'tis done, 'tis past,—
If life be lone to death be less affright ;
The soul's a matrix wherein breath is cast,
And if it shapen but one mould to might,
Such one may suit himself to fuller sight,
If mantled from the murkier-boding things ;—
Be mine the lot to court the greater right—
From traffic, spoil, disgrace's damning stings,
Where Love forgets to smile and Muse no longer sings.

XXIII.

All joyous richness, love's untamed delights,
Have I thus orphaned for a dearer pride ;
I would attain to less enshrouded heights,
There led by thee the kind, the frightless guide—
Oh, Wisdom, I would know thy every chide !
Thy breast imparts vitality of balm,
Elysian-brewed, unto thy holy side
Incline my hope in sweet yet wakeful calm,
My trust, my love, I bow and yield to thee a palm !

* * * *

XXIV.

The great round moon drops paling in the west,
The straggling mists reluctant seek the cloud,
The light waves dance along the forest crest
On quivering dews to courtly Morn endowed ;
Triumphant, Dawn slow rends the nightly shroud,
As Phœbus draws his holy tethered reins,
Assumes the car that blinds the starry crowd,
Up, up he speeds—the universal mains
Flash in his glance supreme which binds the glittering trains !

XXV.

Resume thy sphere Calliope's low fire!
With ancient spell the tamer ken reblind
As yonder sun ; revive the holy choir,
Awake ye elements of louder kind
To harmonies unechoed, unassigned !
In my weak ear pour thy concentered whole,
Or strike a chord beyond twe puny mind,
My throbbing lyre restring to faint unroll
Creations of a heart in universe of soul.

XXVI.

About the plains of Fancy's pristine bloom
Wild wandered many a kind yet reckless gale,
When Madness would a studious mien assume,
Or Contemplation soothe the fiercer wail ;
Then Happiness knew love her only trail,
Alas, that bliss than rage should be more blind !
That life than truth should grow less wisely pale,
That hope in passions should be so entwined,
When blight descends on one, to death are all consigned !

XXVII.

The crimson glow that lights the opened rose
But proves the heat that makes the violet sear ;
The bidden flush may wither ere it glows,
And love prove sadness tho' as joy appear ;
The pleasured thrill but founts fuller a tear
To glisten, bound, and o'er pale blushes run ;
The rapture's echo fades a requiem drear,
The note resounds but not as once begun,
As envy robs the heart which hate has half undone.

XXVIII.

Tho' I have visions pulsed with wakeful throbs
Of ambient life creating other forms,
The freer breath is yet unfree from sobs,
The higher air alive with wildest storms,
Refluxing thought with feeling's fiery swarms
And bursting wrath, dispelling with the hour
Love—memory—Passion woke to dire alarms
Calls vain on elements of holier dower
To throw the spell of gods and blast the demon's power !

XXIX.

Yet madness may be tamed, becoming scorn,
And scorn grow mockery of light despair,
Despair may weaken to a vague forlorn,
And this return the hope whence came the care ;
Or it may still the furies' aspect wear,
Till conscience, daring knowledge of the spells,
Demands the craft that wove the evil snare,
And awes—as demons seek their separate hells
When in a mad revolt the righteous soul rebels,

XXX.

Away, away, ye phantoms of an hour!
My muse beholds ye a displeasing throng,
Yet such as holds a strange and subtle power
That breathes a note discordant in my song;
Farewell, ye hates! the soul is half in wrong,
The world tho' bad in part may be believed,
In thought life's numbers lag or leap along
The coldest breast to some soft warmth hath heaved,
And he who loveless lives may not yet die ungrieved!

XXXI.

Awhile I stay the day's outlasting spell,
To reassume when other forms beguile;
The shapes that beck to images that dwell
In my mind's chamber shrinks as specters vile,
Forgive, oh God! the world may trust awhile
My pardon, till the sight these fancies drew
With youthful glance meets fame's approving smile,
Till scorn denuded wastes the hate it grew,
And waiting Muse aspires to love's diviner hue.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

The wasting splendor of the sunken sun
Diffused above the gates of biding eve—
The o'erdrawn pall of light and glory done—
Closed on the wan worn form it did receive,
The sable web did darkness stilly weave
Above the vale where fell the Hermit's sigh,
The blooming orbs their plains did scarcely leave,
The mist-veiled moon slow climbed the forest high,
And ghostly crept along the solitude of sky.

II.

There is a life which breathes alone in thought,
Our second self, the soul's disporting child,
The minstrel of all passions Fate hath taught
To reel unto her chant in dances wild ;
Which stays no thrill where Fortune hath reviled ;—
I live myself, another, yet innate,
In sympathies o'erwrought, tho' unbeguiled,
Linked to the heart that grows unto my fate,
Becoming thus as one my fancy doth create.

III.

Survey thy past! familiar shades await,
And colors blend in hues iridian,
Dividing mists uncurtain youth's estate.
The regions fair, now narrowed many a span,
Re-bloom upon the eye's maturer scan,
Till care forgets what tears the witherings wrung,
And self revived invokes again on man
The craving plea by fortune rudely stung—
A prayer to Fate grown old, yet dying ever young.

IV.

Can fitful strife or envious passion still
The feelings born of Hope's ingenious youth?
Can scornful fate a lost affection chill?
Or time undo a heart's long buried truth?
Although the strain grow passionate uncouth,
In *his* or mine too much of chillness falls,
Each nature is as one and thusly show'th
Its fartherest source in life's confining walls,
By pouring on the sight what gladdens or appalls.

V.

Ah, this sweet sympathy that breathes again
Of sweeter cares borne o'er the wrecks behind,
Where widowed hopes have grieved apart from men,
And man is lost, where men forget their kind
In selfish haste to please the common mind,
Or failing thus endure the fatal sting,
Full many a life thus to itself grows blind—
Each thought a mote to hope a sightless thing,
The soul a drear expanse where no oases spring.

VI.

When on my sight doth pour the steady beam
Of memory's bereft tho' patient star,
What nameless blessings in the twinklings gleam
Removing many a dark-set future bar;
What rays resplendent pouring from the far
Reflecting goal whereto my visions grow,
Triumphant borne beyond the present jar,
Till hope and memory blend, becoming so
The soul's unveiled design midst sheen of holy glow;

VII.

The idle fashioning of wearied care,
The toy of Fate doomed with the drowsy hour—
Yet o'er its wreck doth breathe a sweet despair,
The soft, kind spirit of some blasted flower
Perennial blown in fragrance for its bower,
Till strange incensed the fancy-doting mind
In visioned realms dark-dreamful seeks a dower,
Or wakes the hope in thought care-unconfined,
To die within those bounds and leave the world behind!

VIII.

Despair is not a grief or wasting fear,
But thought displanted from its trembling love,
Unknowing passion of unglistened tear,
Aspect of death, preceding gleams above
Of fancy where hope's prodigal may rave;
I deem it kindness, as a holy nod—
Shaming the base if naught it doth approve—
We call nor shun not, as with failing plod
We lean to soulless hell or stumble on to God.

IX.

Yet wildly I essay my roving verse,
Here let me turn to Clio's heated throng—
Convulsing ages, blessing to accurse,
Disrobing truth to guise a royal wrong—
The thundered numbers struck to victory's song
Have found an echo in our peaceful day
Among the waves, oh, isle to freedom strong,
Re-thrill the spell that wakes to glory's lay,
Demand thy rightful star to tyranny's dismay!

X.

Unyielding still, tho' racked by warring years,
Unbroken still, tho' wrung and harshly torn,
Thou nurse of death whose gory breast endears
All they who grieve to they which cannot mourn,
All they who bear to they who once have borne—
Oh, dost thou sleep or waking cannot see
My country? Lo, these shackles thou has worn!
Release the fire long coveted by thee,
Thou proudest bearing ray,—thy north—thy south—thy free!

XI.

Guard while ye may that yet unblossomed bud.
Thou art the sun to call it into bloom;
Or wilt thou hide thy face from earth-drawn blood
In clouds that rise and shut thee from the gloom?
Nay, nay dispell; oppression feels her doom
If thou but gleam;—shall yet a flowered land
Her laurels yield to strew on Freedom's tomb?
Not she! *she* by propitious zephyrs fanned—
Break not that stern, mad power! stay, stay thy ruthless hand!

XII.

Columbia be shamed! Have ye no sons
To bear the shock or nurse a valiant scar?
To meet the flash of Error's blinding guns,
Or breast the gale of fury-driven war?
Afield ye brave! Why trust a future bar
To boastful Scorn? To-day hath seen the spoil,
The coming shade may boast another star
If we but flame to its enkindled toil,—
My land for thee a flower blooms fair on Cuba's soil!

XIII.

What would that opening fairness rudely sear?
What, but a pride too crazed for men to feel?
Since hesitation lends a thought to fear,
Time, edge thy scythe to strike for deathless weal!
Hence Fate, marauder turn, fix, fix the seal,
The red, red seal which war hath lent a stain,
The crimsoned touch of quick or dying zeal;
The battle's iron forged of heated pain
Hath Gomez borne for naught? Did Marti fall in vain?

XIV.

The furious thrust of stung and baffled pride
An hundred swells to where it drains one heart;
There have the brave but not all bravest died,
There hath the lightning sheathed the flaming dart,
The rousing Thunder failed his awful art
When providence hath reckoned Freedom's woe,
And deeply panged—'twould make the holiest start!—
When forth was brought from press and hail of foe
The pale, the lifeless, yet undying Maceo!

XV.

Vile treachery! or was it treason's guile?
No matter, baseness suits to any name—
Conquest, the lustful vain, the hellish vile,
The synonym of ruin, pride, or shame—
Less damnable appears in darkest aim,
Than proud Corruption's bloody, reeking trail!
Theirs were brave hearts, and theirs be fitting fame,
Yet hosts may fall unheard of victory's hail,
To burn upon the plain or rot within the vale.

XVI.

What news beyond? Oh base, oh fateful deed!
One greatest felled! What, shall we shout or weep?
Ye braves for one rash stroke shall Justice bleed?
The last deep fount unveined—oh, God, what sleep
Must freeze on Freedom's eyes ere she shall keep
Repenting dread of what she could not shun!
Lust villianous and dark-bred vengeance deep
Crazed Anarchy to seek a worthy one,
And turn her hellish glare on Spain's mistaken son!*

XVII.

Castillo! noblest of the noble wrong,
Death broke the flowered stem, but left the thorn—
Thy talents slew, but not the feelings strong,
Which held thee forth a lord untitled born—
Sincere in aught thy countrymen shall mourn,
And justly mourn, since time reserves a moan
To grieving Fury centered all in scorn,
And Truth awaits—a patience well her own.
When Crime undoes a god and reddens Error's throne!

*Canovas del Castillo, Spanish Premier, who was assassinated, August, 1897.

XVIII.

These things are history's and shall be writ,
And other minds shall heed when this frail song
Hath not an echo of the rhymes unfit
For long awakening. And where the strong
Have shed their strength when Glory marks her throng—
Where steaming gore pollutes the victors' bed,
And ravished Nature wails the soothless wrong—
Shall she not there a sweeter banquet spread
War's fruits on Honor's board repast for these her dead?

XIX.

Again the battle's seal is set! Again
The ravager walks wide; on wonted fields
His tread reshakes the hollow turf as when
Lance gleamed on lance, shields on reflecting shields;
His shout less loud, tho' 'tis a cry that yields,
The gasp of nations breathed in broken shame,
All eager bent on one which fearless wields
The prided mace of many a wasted flame—
Thou ancient hymned oh Greece, the daring and the same!

XX.

Let me return nor yet disown my theme,
Return to him who recks no present lot
Of man recoiling on some wasting dream
Of fretted nations seeking what is not
The thing they wish, if haply it were got;
He in the sacredness of listed shade
Anew would wake the stillness of the spot,
With Echo tongued in every vale and glade
To tame the reckless note his daring muse essayed.

XXI.

Upon yon starry beds forever flung—
The azure mystery of things beyond—
Repose the souls of many harps unstrung ;
Choose ye a star in this divinely fond
O'erspreading couch, when night displays her wand,
And conjured rays seem dreaming to a prime
Of sweet unbodied luster holy donned,—
What rapture notes have broken on that clime
To Shakespeare's glowing sweep or Milton's touch sublime !

XXII.

Who hath not dreamed and dreaming hath not felt
The passion borne ere death had found a suit,
The spirit's thrill when things not mortal knelt
In soulful wonder—worship sweetly mute—
To strains of that divinely chorded lute,
'Twere death to strike or chord for sin's rehearse—
A strand is snapped—oh, God, behold the fruit !
Partaken there by earth's lone bearing nurse,
A heart that flamed to love yet bore an endless curse.

XXIII.

Be kind in aught that tells of goodness lost,
'Twas not her fall that made thee sin the more,
Oh, man, the tempted 'twixt two evils tossed—
The threat august, the fiend's unreasoning lore—
'Twas love's own offer ? Nay, thou wert before
Destined to shield ; thine after pride avers
Thou never knew what anguish filled her store,
Yet weakly sought the bliss where frailty errs—
The curse is thine, oh, man, the penitence but hers !

XXIV.

Yea, she hath wept ; the tears that freezing fell
As driven flakes from sorrow's swollen cloud,—
So lightly pure tho' chillingly to swell
The drifts of passion, icing where endowed
The deep intensity of love o'erflowed—
In this reveal her woe as if the tread
Of hell-born shapes had ceased where Virtue bowed
In knowing shame of when, to truth unwed,
Young beauty knelt to lust and Love looked on her dead !

XXV.

Fade all ye blooms and waste ye teeming sweets !
Thy seed dropt mortal fills a season's toil ;
Thou firstling Eden from thy holy seats
Great pride of travailled nature—Satan's spoil—
Waste, fade, and leave alone thy sterile soil !
Reclaim thy gifts, oh God ! none that deceive
Or know deceit shall taste, tho' earth recoil
On life, and death but woos she none could leave
The mother of a race, the fair and erring Eve.

XXVI.

An Eden lost, and earth that bears a Cain,
Unwisely led as Eve shall feel a sting
Thrice bitter, striking through her vital vein,
All deadly cleaving 'twill eternal wring
Her deepest source since all her bearings bring
The curse of blood ;—for all the apple hangs,
All pluck, all die, all lose the hold thing ;
All die ? All *sin* awaits the fiery fangs
Thro' death the branding-iron for hell's unconquering pangs !

XXVII.

Fit symbol of the wise and evil day
Which worships God alone for what he gives,
Or taking that not given vails his ray
Unto the conscious shame of aught that lives
In us unblest; the purer nature strives
As once did Eve, with wary flattery borne
Through carnal breath, the human beat revives,
The world, an Adam stands too proud to mourn,
While God the sun looks on with fiercest vengeance
Sworn!

XXVIII.

Lo, there, where Mammon deals his nods around,
Incline weak knees, and humble falling knaves
Accord their breath in loud, confusing sound,
And seek a smile tho' growing baser slaves
As they are blest; yea, men seek He who saves
Upon the throne where Fortune turns her rod,
Youth, genius, wisdom, age, and gallant braves,
Jew, Christian, yield, or low or holy shod.
Religion and the world fall to another God!

XXIX.

Hush! 'tis a mockery of high intent,
For thus hath been, and is, and yet shall be;
Divinely deemed and mortal known 'twas meant
For Truth to sleep till startled errors flee
The earth—the toy of great Divinity—
Till visions suit to life's eternal need,
And light the blinded universe shall free;
When Gabriel's muse wakes on the fiery reed,
And to the rising peal all death shall yield its seed

XXX.

The tale is old and hath been better sung,
But Adam's is the breath, the age of all;
My harp hath not upon the willow hung
For hapless winds to steal along and thrall,
And echo what is known; it seeks to call
The things forgot, to fill the unconceived,
To wake, create, or justly to appall
The living dead, to start where unbelieved,
And draw the spirit's breath of rapture notes bereaved.

XXXI.

The strands upon my harp are three—no more—
Man, time, and God, and these re-echo all
Age-struck, star-keyed, or drawn to earthly score;
Dust, breath, and spirit! Mind, its broken wall!
Heart, life, and love—scorn, hate or envy's gall!
Hope, death, and hell—or bliss!—the mortal's strain
Is told; the earthly guest of glare and pall
Departs, to time a drop but fell to stain,
To God a thought more weak or all too basely vain!

XXXII.

Oh, meager self, tho' Glory touch thy hand,
And fair Minerva smooth her spacious lap,
And give thee place among her favored band,
To whom she richly yields a teeming pap,
Till drunken minds refuse eternal sap,
When Fortune lulls to pride's unresting sleep—
Oh, deem not such a more than mortal nap,
For much is deigned to man he cannot keep,
As for some toy denied the mother's babes do weep.

XXXIII.

Dear foster-nurse, grant me a waking kiss,
Nor let me dream beyond thy wonted sweil
Of potence pure, and fail thy yielded bliss ;
In deep embrace I own thy breathing spell,
Thus fondly thrive and by thy richness dwell
A part of space and thought and Godly care—
August my state, nor thou by Eden fell !
Shun Adam's throng, forget the mortal share,
And man may part the veil where angels must forbear.

XXXIV.

A soul pervades the very air we take,
A breathing substance charged divinely through,
And bearing deep the seal but death shall break--
The willing throb which Fate may dearly rue
The gleam, the smile, the sight when all is new,
The thought unread, the wonderment concealed,
The infant joys speak most unconscious true
Of life—Divinity in part revealed—
To teach us of that life, the very breath we yield.

XXXV.

How holy then is man to earth alone !
How Godly formed, tho' marring nature's cast !
Empire of soul ! Sworn Passion's only throne !
And quickened through to powers unreckoned vast ;
Compass of thought, to thrill--to shock—to blast !
The die of fate, how filled the set design !
Though death deface and claim a pomp at last
The breath remounts a spirit lisping "THINE !"
Oh Love unlessened still, the first, the all divine !

* * * *

XXXVI.

If in the hour of unpolluted dreams
Through vague unrest we chase an iris thrown
In arching beauty o'er our waking gleams
Which sleep may touch and seem more nearly known;
If in that hour our lives were fully shown,
Unscreened to all we feared or sought or loved,
Could heaven fail to bless our truly own
For all we sigh? Could heart be fuller proved?
Would heaven seem less far, or hell be more removed?

XXXVII.

Sweet thought! but dream? oh, fair unchanging dream
Of life beyond, the which we cannot guess;
Shall hence our spirits fail in that they seem?
Of all we love and never more can bless,
Of all we feel to never full express,
And wait on bliss where follows double dole?
Nay, dearest hope! a new-born's lost caress,
The ever fond embrace of soul to soul,
A seraph's sigh and love the tomb were heaven's goal!

XXXVIII.

But whyfore dream of love's ungranted bliss,
When hope is young and earthly passion sweet?
Within a page what life we living miss!
How many joys for every truth we meet!
What smiles for each dull word our minds repeat!
Oh heart! Oh love! the charmer and the spell,
Oh death, so known to each uncertain beat!
The pallid cast on beauty's softened swell,
The fond—the fair—the loveliest, alas!—too well.

XXXIX.

Perhaps to seek I have unknowing lost
What most ennobles life's respiring clay ;
Perhaps to gain what secret bliss has cost,
Perhaps to know—what grant shall soon repay
The wasted fervor of my studious day !
The lying throb, the shallow selfish smile,
The care unmourned by thought full falsely gay,
The forced endearments of ambition's guile—
Shall love to zeal resign ? Is knowledge worth the while ?

XL.

Sages of eld, whose very breath was thought !
Whose lives were wisdom's and whose fortunes man's,
How God defined the skill wherewith ye wrought !
Tho' some abused—where knowledge envious scans,
Mocker of God, of systems, powers, plans ;—
Unsoulling man to blastingly enfold
Immortal hope, the pulse of mortal spans,
Congealed to break through life's unfleshly mould,
And freeze on demon eyes till hell itself grow cold !

XLI.

A Jove behold ! with halo glowing round,
And daring far to take unmeasured flight—
The cloud beyond—the void—oblivion's bound—
A comet scales the rounded walls of night,
And seems the source of some unkindled light,
Till through the veil where chaos stands withdrawn,
Majestic pales beyond terrestrial sight,—
The sole grand actor of an earthly dawn,
Its stage the sky, its fire the sun's, 'twas marked—'tis gone !

* * * *

XLII.

And here we cease, to be more strongly brief
Best fell our broken pen ere half were wrought ;
But passions compass aye the mind's belief,
And here but little's learned where much is taught,
Again one seeker blest where millions sought ;
Yet, yet not done tho' pained the senses ache,
Nor curb to utterance the glowing thought,
We yet shall sing, in bolder raptures break
And move the hardened world which love would fain forsake.

XLIII.

Oh, Being of my languid lay the soul,
My harp be thine till Muse recalls our strain ;
Or weak or fair we conned our meager role
And sang as some have sung to sing in vain,
'Tis well, well little sought and less may gain ;—
Thou wert a comet on my darkened view,
Unfixed and fired to some celestial pain,
To burning dare what age may better do,
Farewell, oh Muse, and THEE, a little while, adieu !

THE SOUL'S INVOCATION.

I.

In the shade of yonder valley,
  Ere the moon hand filled her horn,
Stalked the phantom of my fancy
  Oh, so sweetly, yet forlorn.
In the magic that the moonlight
  Cast on every shape around,
To the strangeness of the passion
  All my trustful heart inbound,
Fell the carol tuned to sadness
  Of a thousand airy things,
Floating on the far-borne zephyrs
  To the night of song and wings,
Stilling, thrilling, wondrous filling
  All the Muse's founted springs.

II.

Sing, oh heart, the lay now borne thee
  In the darkness and the gleam,
Mellowed to a mystic beauty
  Shaming day's unshadowed beam ;
Sing of innocence and wonder
  In the lore of cradled birth,
Sing of sweetly opened knowledge
  In the din of childish mirth ;
Sing of hope, of love, and fancy
  In a softly echoed strain,
Of ambition warm to burning,
  Daring fate's full-armored train,
In the throb of youthful ardor
  Flushed in doubt and stilled in pain.

III.

Sing of life and toil triumphant
In the world's loud-voicing breath,
Of an age of measured calmness
And the chordless thrill of death;
Sing of nations that have shaken
In the racking wrath of war,
Sing of scepters broken timeless
Leaving princely brows a scar;
Sing of Liberty, the goddess
Of a glory heaven-eyed,
Veiled in splendor holy kindled
Blinding sheen of royal pride;
Sing of truth's exultant chorus
O'er the wreck where error died.

IV.

Sing of beauty, nature's fondling,
Drunken of a honeyed praise,
Of the glow outbearing blushes
Springing from the heart's amaze;
Sing of knowledge manful teaching
Gemmed with many a starry ray,
Sing of Godly power and passion,
Wondrous sealed in every clay;
Sing of other lyres and singing,
That to thee a chord may bring,
See, the goddess fair is bending,
Poised upon uncertain wing,
Fame new prey beneath awaits thee!
Strike thy harp! Oh, minstrel sing!

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE ON PEA RIDGE NORMAL COLLEGE.

A fountain deep my slumbrous spirit drank,
"A vision!" Fancy's whisper bade me wait—
A vision? Hope grown weary dreaming sank
As Muse unbarred the creaking doors of Fate.
What magic now deceives my weakened gaze?
Long since these hallowed, echoing halls I trod,
When Time, the miser, dealt his cumbrous days
With slothful sands 'neath Learning's spareless rod.
'Tis much the same as ere, save age hath lent
The dingy gloom of years, there is no change
In all that is; but wisdom's quest hath spent
My younger sight, and thought hath feelings strange.
Alone! through Memory's mystic aisles to grope,
To feel what once I deemed I knew, and sought
With faltering pace; to kiss white lips of Hope
Long dead; amid this solitude ef thought
To dream what I could be or may have been,
Or weep where Error's steps have stained the sod,
To feel the love that makes time-kneeling men
The fitting denizens of Earth and God.
Within this crumbling temple of the Past,
Full many a fear to anxious thought resigned,
Stern knowledge reared from Nature's crudest cast
The grand, Immortal Temple of the Mind.
The trembling hope that patient toil hath blest,
The timid passion of a trustful heart,
The eager thought bent on untiring quest—

Fit elements of Wisdom's noble art—
Have proved their worth and earth hath felt the tread
Of young Ambition loosened from the cell
Of centuried lore, where hungered talent fed—
To test what science vainly sought to tell.
The world hath known them, they have known the world—
Companions of my toil and young desires—
Though envy's sting, though shafts by error hurled
Have scarred the brow where hope's enkindled fires
With growing luster lit a devious path
Up perilous steeps to Fame's far-reaching ray;
Ah, some have fallen, Death inspired to wrath
The northern blight that bore their breath away.
I would not dwell on this, 'tis not my theme;
But as I raise my drooping dreamy eyes
These halls expand, and thus expanding seem
Embellished by a touch that glorifies.
And here young minds still throb with anxious thought,
And here sage Wisdom shapes the soul's career,
And hearts are warm with hope, and is there aught
Not changed? All changed, such change as calls a tear.
New hearts, new hopes, a mightier expanse
Of Learnings walls, the all-empowering sense
Of higher destiny untaught by chance
And redolence of Fame's new-burned incense.
Fair Vernon! Truth's imperial dwelling place,
And Thought's rich palace, Hope's immortal shrine,
The soul's deep quickening—all that fitting grace,
Such nobleness as comes from thee and thine
Expand! since knowledge hath no bounding stones,
Uplift thy roofs! To Wisdom is no sky,

Thy voice returns to thee its echoed tones
From realms where Future's boundless treasures lie.
I loved thee, Vernon, what thou bore, and feel
That love rekindled in its holy prime ;
But who can know what love may yet conceal,
What feelings may not condescend to rhyme ?
Adieu ! The quickened thought of distant years
Hath spent its flight ; it could not longer dwell
On such, the Muse hath known too much of tears
Ere this ; sweet vision, boundless hope farewell.

THE POET'S WISH.

Soft steals the breath of some sweet whispered thought,
Whereby my day is filled with double love ;
And hope, fair image, flitteth like a dove
When loosed from this weak earthly grasp where caught,
And rises on bold pinions, seeking aught
In far expanding spheres where fancies rove
To simple trustfulness of heart may prove
Ennobling boon, which nobler minds have sought
Midst beauty's haze till wrapped by shadowy fate
Entangled ere their eyes had marked the goal
Whereto they toiled. Then let my spirit wait
Where endless harmonies of feeling roll
And thought triumphant in diviner state
Calls through the echoing palace of the soul.

SONNET,

On the Author Completing His Twentieth Year.

A minute wonderling of love and clay,
A selfish thought shut from the eternal mind,
The pulsive substance of some spirit blind;
A year, a twain, a decade, and to-day
A score! A thrill like some far spirit's play,
A parted veil, a vision undivined,—
A touch, a voice, a face—oh gentle, kind!
A silence—lost!—oh life, oh love—declined!
All done and all endured, with harp in hand
I walk with Echo calling to a strand
Yet echoless; life's self an echo—weep?
What tears to freeze on little joys unplanned
To come! Oh God, to raptures vast and deep
My soul must wake or dream to deathless sleep!

September 12, 1897.

THE PEACE SURPASSING KNOWLEDGE.

Death a sleep? 'Tis an awakening
Of man's sluggish immortality,
Breaking of the rod ephemeral;
Deep, regenerative quickening—
Love's transition, thought and bodily;
Glorious soul bearing metaphysis;
Visionless—perennial holiness,—
Sleepless, dreamless, endless soulfulness!

NONE LIKE THEE.

Hope of hearts, sweet nature's dower,
Life of beauty all to me ;
Blown to shame the vainest flower,
Breathed to thrill the softest key
Throbbing love's awakened power,
Calling long and tenderly—
None like thee, none, none like thee !

More to passion's sweet divine,
More to glory none may see,
Is the spell so gently thine,
Stilling all the soul may be—
Softly, softly, hushed to pine
In a chordless ecstacy—
None like thee, none, none like thee !

Spirit fair list, list my prayer,
Virtue's breath tho' rarely free,
Falls an incense on the air,—
Be such thine tho' naught to me,
Or let fall my fondest care
If could end thy purity—
None like thee, none, none like thee !

WASHINGTON.

A sun he rose, sun-like he reigned,
Night's shadows shrank before his glance
A sun he sank, as heaven ordained,
No child of Destiny or chance,
But born of God's high sight, the ken
That makes man feel the power of men.

February 22, 1897.

ENOUGH.

Enough of the day, enough of the day,
Enough of the blinding day!
Enough of the toil, enough of the spoil;
Enough of the light, enough of the blight,
Enough of the scorching ray!
Enough of the love, the hearts it may move,
Enough of their friendless care;
Enough of the jumble, the stumble, and tumble,
Enough of the hoping, the stooping, and groping,
Enough of the passion to bear!
Enough of the haste, enough of the waste,
Enough of the mocking hour;
Enough of the running, the shunning, and cunning,
Enough of the yearning the spurning, and burning—
Enough! 'tis a withered flower;—
Enough of its sweetness, its boasted completeness—
Enough! to a sunless bower!

LINCOLN.

A wreath for pallid brow?
A tear for weepless eyes?
A word for speechless sighs?
Tribute for endless vow?

Here lived and fell a man,
Such one as knew but men;
And earth sees many a span
Before his like again.

February 12, 1897.

"DAYS THAT ARE PAST."

Days that are past as pearls that have sunken
  Far in the caves of time's tideless ocean,
Thoughts that awake when memory has drunken
  Long of the nectar, love's own devotion ;
Hearts that have walked too often with sorrow
  Mingle with those of pleasure unbroken,
Oh, the young days when sweet seemed the morrow !
  Hope was all love, to earth all a token !
What though to toil this mind's endless passion ?
  What though to grieve this feverish ambition ?
Memory hath words which friendship will fashion—
  Hope is all love and love all fruition !

L'ENVOI.

But half is known,
  But half my song ;
Love has not words her own
  And Muse's wayward throng
Of skipping fancies often tell
  Much love knows not or much she long has
    bade farewell.

FINIS.

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